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Hill Sees Policy in 'Disarray'

Members of Both Parties Express Shock, Plan Probes

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President Reagan's foreign policy was described as in "total disarray" yesterday by members of Congress from both parties, who vowed a complete investigation of the escalating controversy and called on Reagan to regain control of administration policy before his personal and political credibility suffers more severe damage on Capitol Hill.

Key lawmakers said they were stunned by the revelation that funds from the covert arms sales to Iran were secretly transferred to rebel forces in Nicaragua—a transaction that Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) described as "a bizarre twist" in the controversy over the arms deal.

It was clear from the initial reaction on Capitol Hill that yesterday's revelation will set off full-scale congressional hearings and investigations on several fronts.

Republicans joined Democrats in asserting that the administration appeared to have violated at least "the spirit" of the Boland Amendment, which was still in effect at the time of the funds transfer and which barred U.S. military aid to the Nicaraguan contras. Some lawmakers called for appointment of an independent counsel to investigate possible criminal violations, while others planned an attempt to impose congressional oversight on the White House's National Security Council.

There were also widespread predictions of renewed efforts in Congress to cut off additional U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan contras, further complicating the administration's embattled policy on Central America.

But the most severe damage appeared to be to Reagan's credibility. Lawmakers of both parties expressed dismay at the disclosure of a major foreign policy operation reportedly being run from the White House without the president's knowledge.

"It was a shocking revelation, and it further shows up the chaotic state of our foreign policy," said Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), who will take over as Senate majority leader in January. "What this says is

that nobody seems really to be in charge of the foreign policy of this country."

"If the president doesn't know something as profoundly consequential as this, something is profoundly wrong," said House Majority Leader James C. Wright Jr. (D-Tex.), expected to succeed retiring House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr. (D-Mass.) in January.

Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) said he found it "difficult to believe" that within the White House only Lt. Col. Oliver L. North of the NSC staff and Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, Reagan's national security adviser, knew of the funds transfers to the contras.

"But either way, it is a sad commentary on the president of the United States," Glenn said. "If he knew about it, then he has willfully broken the law; if he didn't know about it, then he is failing to do his job. After all, we expect the president to know about the foreign policy activities being run directly out of the White House."

Republicans also joined Democrats in expressions of disbelief over the revelation of a contra connection in the Iranian arms sales.

"I find the lack of policy coordination, as well as its questionable legality, to be absolutely amazing," Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R-Kan.) said.

"It's incredible," said Rep. William S. Broomfield (Mich.), ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Broomfield said he believes Reagan's assertion that he knew nothing of the operation, but that the thought that the president was unaware of a major foreign policy undertaking "bothers me a great deal."

Like Glenn, Broomfield said it is "awfully hard for me to believe" that only North and Poindexter were aware of it, and he predicted that their departure from the White House will only temporarily still demands for a major personnel shake-up in the White House. "Be-

fore it is over, there are others who will have to go," he said.

Rep. Dick Cheney (Wyo.), a member of the House GOP leadership and White House chief of staff under President Gerald R. Ford, said Reagan should have known about the funds transfers to the contras. "You can't run effective foreign policy if the man himself is unaware of something of that enormity," he said.

Cheney said a full-scale congressional investigation of the Iranian arms deals and the Nicaraguan contra connection is inevitable and that he will support it. Asked about the state of administration foreign policy, he said: "It's in pretty bad disarray."

In the storm of criticism, Democrats stressed the importance to the country that Reagan remain a credible president. "It is a tragedy for the nation when the credibility of the president is so damaged that it hampers his ability to effectively conduct domestic and foreign policies," O'Neill said.

House Majority Whip Thomas S. Foley (D-Wash.) said, "I sense a concern that this could become a serious wound to the administration, and I don't want to see that. I don't want to see a disabled administration."

The House Foreign Affairs Committee already had hearings scheduled on the arms transfer to Iran for Dec. 8-10 and is expected to hear first from Secretary of State George P. Shultz. Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), who is due to take over as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, said he hopes to hold hearings on the controversy when the 100th Congress convenes.

Meanwhile, Sen. David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.), the outgoing chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said the panel "will continue to investigate all aspects of the intelligence community's involvement in the Iran arms sale relationship."

Durenberger said he is convinced, from closed briefings yesterday, that neither the State De-

partment nor the Central Intelligence Agency knew of the funds transfers to the contras.

While these congressional investigations are heading into high gear and Reagan is struggling to repair his credibility, one of the first victims of yesterday's disclosure could be the administration's program to provide aid to the contras. Congress, under intense pressure from the administration, voted earlier this year to provide \$100 million in renewed aid to the rebels.

Democratic critics of this policy were already planning an attempt to cut off the aid and appeared to have been given a boost by yesterday's disclosure of a link between the contras and the Iranian arms deal.

"I'll bet it's a cold day in Washington, D.C., before any more money goes to Nicaragua," Durenberger said.

The shock waves set off by yesterday's revelations were not confined to Capitol Hill. Two former senior government officials, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry A. Kissinger, described administration foreign policy as in "crisis."

Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter, said that "we are witnessing a crisis of the president's foreign policy" caused by "the fragmentation of decision-making, disarray among the people involved and perhaps not a sufficient degree of direct presidential involvement."

Kissinger, who was secretary of state to Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford, said U.S. foreign policy has now "started to come apart."

Brzezinski said he thinks that Reagan did not know of the operation, but added: "An admission that he did not know what was going on is pretty damning."

Both echoed widespread skepticism that the contra funds transfers were the work only of North. "It boggles the mind," Brzezinski said. "I find that hard to believe," Kissinger added.

Staff writers Joanne Omang and Dusha Doder contributed to this report.